

Subject: Fwd: Safety / Security Issues in Little Tokyo
From: "Kristin Fukushima" <kristin@littletokyola.org>
Date: 2/6/17, 5:23 PM
To: Brian Kito; Ellen Endo; Joanne kumamoto

FYI - this came though to the LTCC general email.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Sean Danconia** <sean@popsean.com>
Date: Mon, Feb 6, 2017 at 11:11 AM
Subject: Safety / Security Issues in Little Tokyo
To: marc.reina@lapd.lacity.org, donald.graham@lapd.lacity.org
Cc: Reverend Mark Nakagawa <revmmn@aol.com>, Laura Okita <lauralawokita@yahoo.com>, info@littletokyola.org

Dear Captain Reina, Captain Graham,

I hope this email finds you both well.

I am a resident of 222 S. Central Ave, Tokyo Villa. Lived in the area for 8 years.

Over the past 6-12 months, we have seen a major increase in a number of issues relating to security & safety which is reaching a point where many of us have become passive victims in our own homes, concerned about going out in the evening. This has now started to bleed into daytime and is becoming a serious concern to me and many other residents in the area. (there was a meeting about this last week between some of our community organizations)

I am considerably younger, stronger than many of the residents of Little Tokyo and as you know, we have at least 3 residences that are filled with elderly retirees that do not have much ability to defend themselves.

Here is a brief summary:

1. Major increase of Skid Row / homeless, panhandlers who have become increasingly threatening, aggressive. This is not the Little Tokyo of years past where there is an occasional annoyance from someone asking for money. The individuals who walk our streets now are essentially extortion artists and will attempt to intimidate and even touch people and/or block people from walking to try and get money from them. I see this happening all the time. On Friday night, I was accosted with my girlfriend on 2nd by a man who jumped out of the shadows and tried to start an altercation. We walked briskly away but not everyone will be so fortunate. In addition, Weller Court had a homeless encampment with 8 people doing much of the same.

I also witness on a daily basis, elderly Japanese on 3rd street between Alameda and Central getting physically harassed — some using their walkers!!! Unbelievable and very unfair to them.

We have almost zero security around our building with respect to Police and the security who used to patrol on the bikes. I rarely see them anywhere in Little Tokyo but if I do, it's normally turning away from a problem as I witnessed in Honda Plaza a few months back.

The other day, a drug addict was puking and defecating in front of our building. I notified two officers on foot patrol in front of Starbucks. Their response was, "that happens all the time" and they walked away. That is not the first time I have asked for assistance in Little Tokyo and been dismissed. At a minimum, they should have called some sort of social services to render aid to the individual and get him out of the middle of our street.

2. 333 S. Alameda / **Centenary United Methodist Church**

The customers at the X-Lanes bowling alley exit at anywhere between 12 and 2AM, drunk, rowdy and dangerous. On Saturday night, they congregated and swelled to around 8 cars and 50 people in front of the mall and Centenary Church, blasting high bass hiphop until 4 am. We called the Police at least 6 times. I never saw anyone show up. Our security guard bravely tried to get them to leave but they just ignored him.

These are not just drunk kids. They are dangerous individuals, drinking in the middle of the street and taking drugs in full view of anyone caring to look, then getting into their cars and driving off (sometimes going backwards or the wrong way on the one-way street). The safety issues is not just a noise problem although imagine how many people here were unable to sleep on Saturday night.

In general, the amount of drunk driving in our area is insane. I see people visibly drunk constantly getting into cars and driving off at top speeds, in an erratic manner. I don't think you need a check point, someone just needs to stand here for 10 minutes on a Friday or Saturday.

Recently, an entire busload of what looked like high school or very young college students exited from 333 (likely at the bowling alley), all visibly drunk and proceed to wreck havoc on the street here until I threatened to call the

Police (which I did).

In general, we have screaming, yelling, fights, honking and car accidents at this location regularly. There is not one night in a week without something happening.

Another issue is that every 2nd Saturday, we have a large group of about 50-60 people show up at 9:30-10:30 AM and block the north sidewalk, as they manage some homeless food bank. They block many of our residents from walking down the street, block cars as they jaywalk and I have seen again, people in walkers forced to go into the street with oncoming traffic putting their lives at risk. I have contacted the Police and city about this issues and also — no result. No response. No action.

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What I would request is that we have increased patrol between the hours of 12am and 230 am at the intersection of Alameda and 3rd, then up 3rd until Central. That's just for our specific building but there is a general issue in the area itself.

There are homeless encampments all over Little Tokyo now. Were were offered drugs the other night by someone between crocker st / omar st as we walked home from dinner. He didn't seem to want to take no for an answer but I got us out of the situation quickly by walking into the middle of the street. Someone else might not be so lucky.

The general feeling in the area is rapidly changing. It's bad for business, property value and civic life in general.

I am fully aware that Police in the US has been mistreated and abused by media, citizens, political parties, etc. for years and not appreciated by many for their service to our communities. But you must also know that the Little Tokyo community is very law abiding, conservative in values and has always had great relationships with our Police. As such, I would like to ask your help. Our HOA and other community centers have been meeting about these problems but they are slow to act and hampered by internal bureaucracies. I would hate to see someone badly hurt or killed as a result of inaction. (as we've had happen in the past)

I would suggest speaking with XLANes, the bar downstairs, the manager at 333 S. Alameda and perhaps see if they can get a security person to disperse crowds on the weekend. Also, I would imagine that Rev. Mark who I have cc'd here is aware of the people using his church property at night to drink and take drugs leaving quite the mess, so I'm sure he has an interest in keeping this area clean and safe.

In general, these issues would be diminished significantly with an increased Police presence which is what I am requesting. None of us want to live in fear and if I am scared to walk home from Weller Court or Little Tokyo Village Plaza these days, I can just imagine what the elderly and disabled residents of our building must feel.

Incidentally, I normally call the non-emergency number for the Police on the weekend unless there is a serious life threatening issue. We don't see much if any response. If there is a better number to call, please let me know.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Best regards,
Sean

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